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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 107373

FOL LUSAKA 1483 SENT ACTION SECSTATE APR 26, 1978 REPEATED
TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1483

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (KAUNDA, KENNETH)
SUBJ: KAUNDA VISIT: OVERVIEW

REF: A) LUSAKA 1470 B) LUSAKA 1473

1. PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES COMES AT A
CRITICAL JUNCTURE FOR HIM PERSONALLY AND FOR HIS NATION'S
FUTURE. HE FACES ENORMOUS PROBLEMS AND WEIGHTY DECISIONS IN THE
NEXT FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS AS HIS OWN POLITICAL FUTURE IN THE
COUNTRY IS THREATENED, ZAMBIA'S ECONOMY STRUGGLES TO OVERCOME
ITS CRISIS AND THE RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT EFFORT REACHES A CLIMAX.

2. KAUNDA'S EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN HIMSELF AND HIS UNIQUE DEMOCRATIC
STYLE WHICH HAVE DOMINATED THE COUNTRY DURING ITS THIRTEEN YEARS
OF INDEPENDENCE, HAVE NEVER BEEN AS SERIOUSLY THREATENED AS
THEY ARE TODAY. HIS POPULARITY HAS FALLEN TO ITS LOWEST LEVEL
EVER. DISSATISFACTION WITH HIS LEADERSHIP EXTENDS WELL BEYOND
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THE URBAN ELITE TO A BROAD CROSS SECTION OF THE COUNTRY. IN
SPITE OF THIS, HE PERSERVERES IN HIS INSISTENCE ON NATIONAL
ELECTIONS LATER IN THE YEAR, KNOWING HE COULD FACE A SERIOUS
CHALLENGE AT THE PARTY CONGRESS PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. THE
PRESIDENT SEEMS TO FEEL DEEPLY THE NEED TO JUSTICZE AND LEGITIMIZE
HIMSELF BEFORE HIS PEOPLE AND THE WORLD IN SPITE OF THE RISK.
THE FACT IS, THERE IS PROBABLY NO OTHER LEADER IN ZAMBIA WHO CAN

UNITE THE COUNTRY BEHIND HIMSELF. FURTHERMORE, MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR THE CURRENT SITUATION HAS BEEN LAID ON KAUNDA'S SUBORDINATES. HIS STRATEGY FOR REELECTION APPEARS TO REST IN NO SMALL PART ON HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE UK AND THE U.S. AND TO AN INTERNATIONAL POSTURE WHICH DEMONSTRATES THE INDEPENDENT AND NONALIGNED NATURE OF HIS LEADERSHIP.

3. KAUNDA SEEMS TO BE RELYING ON A DRAMATIC DEMONSTRATION THAT ZAMBIA'S ECONOMY CAN IMPROVE RAPIDLY. TO DO THIS HE SEEKS CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY FROM THE UK AND THE U.S. HE WILL VISIT LONDON FOR TALKS WITH CALLAGHAN BEFORE WASHINGTON, SEEKING A CONCRETE OFFER OF ASSISTANCE (REFTEL B). HE IS BRINGING WITH HIM BOTH HIS MINISTER OF FINANCE AND GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK AS WELL AS OTHER ECONOMIC TECHNICIANS. IN WASHINGTON HE VERY MUCH HOPES FOR A SUBSTANTIAL COMMITMENT OF ASSISTANCE (REFTEL A). ZAMBIA HAS AGREED TO A CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING NOW SCHEDULED FOR JUNE AT WHICH IT HOPES TO RECEIVE OTHER PLEDGES OF ASSISTANCE FROM WESTERN DONORS. KAUNDA HOPES THAT THIS WILL REESTABLISH CREDITOR CONFIDENCE AND GET THE FLOW OF GOODS GOING AGAIN. HE WOULD PRESENT THIS EVIDENCE TO THE ELECTORATE IN ORDER TO REASSURE THEM THAT PRESENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES ARISING OUT OF EVENTS BEYOND HIS CONTROL ASSOCIATED WITH THE FALL IN COPPER-PRICE AND RHODESIAN SITUATION WOULD SOON BE ALLEVIATED.

4. AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT A PREOCCUPATION TO KAUNDA AS THE DOMESTIC
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POLITICAL SITUATION AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IS THE DEVELOPING CRISIS OVER A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT. KAUNDA IS CAUGHT BETWEEN HIS OWN COMMITMENT TO JOSHUA NKOMO AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ON THE ONE HAND AND THE INCREASINGLY STRONG OPPOSITION WITHIN ZAMBIA TO ITS DEEP AND PARTISAN INVOLVEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE PF ON THE OTHER. ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POPULAR FEELING IS WIDESPREAD CONCERN OVER ZAMBIA'S APPARENT GROWING INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA. KAUNDA SEES THE VISIT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE RHODESIAN SITUATION IN DEPTH WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, DEMONSTRATING TO HIM WHY THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS UNJUST AND WILL NOT WORK, AND SEEKING HIS SYMPATHY AND HELP IN IMPOSING AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT ON THE LINES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS.

5. KAUNDA'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES AND APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE APPEARS TO BE PART OF A BROADER PROGRAM TO DEMONSTRATE ZAMBIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND NONALIGNED POLICIES. NOT ONLY WILL HE BE VISITING THE UK ON HIS WAY TO THE STATES BUT HE HAS INVITED THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF STATE TO MEET IN LUSAKA IN APRIL OF NEXT YEAR AND THE QUEEN TO PAY A STATE VISIT JUST PRIOR TO THAT. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT HE IS PLANNING A VISIT TO CHINA LATER THIS YEAR. ALL THIS SEEMS DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE TO ZAMBIANS

IN AN ELECTION YEAR THE INDEPENDENCE FROM CUBAN AND SOVIET
ASSISTANCE IN HIS RHODESIA POLICY. IT ALSO MAKES CLEAR TO THE
SOVIETS AND CUBANS THAT HE HAS OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND
HELP. THUS THE SUCCESS OF HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES CAN
PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE HIS OWN DESIRE
TO HOLD THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS AT ARM'S LENGTH.
LOW UNQUOTE VANCE

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